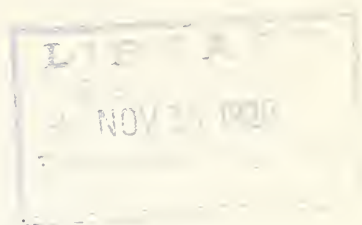


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



WOLF, COYOTE, AND BOBCAT TRAPPING IN WYOMING

The following information has been collected by observing the methods of the most successful predatory animal hunters of the Biological Survey, by Charles J. Bayer, Predatory Animal Inspector for the District of Wyoming-South Dakota. Certain methods may be used to better advantage in some localities than in others but the hunter can soon find out which are best adapted to his particular use.

TRAPPING EQUIPMENT

The following equipment should be taken along when traps are being looked after:

- 1 pair clean cotton gloves (for trap setting).
- 1 canvas, 3 feet square, used to kneel on and to put dirt on while making a trap setting; it should be rubbed over the body of a coyote to get the coyote scent.
- 1 strong string (to tie coyote's mouth shut).
- 1 hatchet or prospector's pick.
- 1 pair lineman's wire cutters, and 3 feet of baling wire.
- 1 bottle of scent, with cork and screw top.
- 1 sharp-pointed No. 9 wire, 4 or 5 inches long, for killing coyote.
- 1 small salt sack, for coyote droppings.
- Gun and cartridges.

PLACING TRAPS

The first thing a hunter does in selecting a place for his traps is to find the tracks of the animals he is after. They are usually noticed at forks of gullies, in the bottom of gulches, at creek crossings, and along roads and trails. These are ideal locations for settings, but too frequently stock interfere by springing traps. This makes it necessary to make the settings at such distance that stock can not interfere.

TRAP SETTINGS FOR WOLVES AND COYOTES

(1) Prairie-dog set.--The prairie-dog set is very successful, when used in a prairie-dog town. Trap stakes must be about 28 inches long and may be made from rake teeth. Trap or shoot the prairie-dog, find a hole that is not used in a prairie-dog town, drive the stake through the prairie dog's shoulders down through the groin, and through the trap chain into the ground immediately on top of the knoll in front of the hole. Set the trap about 8 inches from the prairie dog, dig a trench about two inches deep on either side of the trap, and rake some of the dirt over the prairie dog, making it look as though it had been partly buried. The trap and chain should be buried at least $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, and the trap pan covered with paper or a piece of an old slicker. In trying to dig out the prairie dog the coyote gets into the trap.

In summer, when the weather is very warm, the entrails of the prairie dog should be removed, and the insides sprinkled thoroughly with salt (about half a handful is sufficient), to keep the bait from spoiling too rapidly. In November it is a good plan to trap or shoot a number of prairie dogs and then freeze them for winter use.

(2) Trail settings.--Trail settings, commonly known as blind settings, are most successful in rough country where animals are forced to go through canyons or passes. Traps are concealed in the center of the trail, and no scents or baits of any kind are used. The narrowest place in a canyon, where trails come together, or the lowest place in a pass, is the best for a trail setting. This will catch wolves or coyotes that would not go near scent settings.

Frequently trail settings are so much interfered with by stock and game that they can not be used, but advantage should be taken of pastures which are vacated during certain times of the year, and traps should be placed in such locations. In making these settings, never come up the road or trail, but come to the trap location at right angles to the road, so that human tracks may not be noticeable. Where coyotes are crawling through woven-wire fences, or coming and going to a carcass, a trail setting is very good.

Two or more traps may be used in a setting, placing them lengthwise of the trail, and the pans 18 inches apart. A stake should be used for each trap, and the chains should be pulled out full length in opposite directions. After making a trail setting, the ground should be smoothed over, and made to look as much as possible as it did before it was disturbed.

(3) Pork crackling set.--Select a site on a high place away from the brush, where the ground is loose, from 5 to 100 feet on the side of a road or trail, taking advantage of the prevailing winds, and set two traps about 18 inches apart. Scatter a handful of pork cracklings around over the trap setting and within a radius of 3 feet, with some in between the traps. A little grease left between the two traps helps to keep the coyote around, if he does not happen to get into the traps while he is picking up the cracklings. After the first coyote is taken, reset the trap, but do not rebait in the timber. Pork cracklings should be chopped up fine, then scorched a little in a hot oven. Breakfast bacon rinds, when prepared in this manner make excellent bait. When either of these two baits is used, some of the grease should be smeared over the traps. Horse meat, raw and chopped up fine, is also good when used in the above manner.

(4) Magpie set.--Tie a magpie by both feet to the top of a sage brush, and make trail sets on every trail from 2 to 4 feet away. If a coyote is near enough to see the magpie flutter, he is almost certain to go after it, and so get into the trap. When this setting is used, the magpie should be fed and watered before the trap is set. The late afternoon is the best time to make the setting.

(5) Natural setting.-- Advantage should be taken of places where coyotes urinate, or where their droppings are found. A carefully prepared blind set, without bait or scent of any kind is best here.

(6) Cut-bank setting.-- Whenever possible, a scent set should be made near the edge of a cut bank, so that when the animal gets into the trap, he will fall over the edge of the bank, and so in a short time will be hanged. It is very rarely that a coyote caught in such a place can get away from the trap by twisting loose. If possible the hunter should stand in the gulch under the bank while this setting is being made.

(7) Open-water sets.-- In making open-water sets for wise animals, the hunter should wade up or down stream for several yards, until he strikes a narrow piece of land jutting into the water. Place the trap near the edge of the water and cover with moss, so that the water barely trickles over the top of the moss. A piece of fish or meat placed under a rock about 8 inches from the trap pan and out towards the center of the stream will attract the coyote.

(8) Barn-yard settings.--Where coyotes are getting away with poultry, they always approach from the side that affords the most cover, such as high sage brush, willows, and cut banks. A few good trail sets in the narrow places will soon get the coyotes.

(9) Badger set.--When a badger, skunk, or porcupine is killed it should be put down in a place where a trap is to be set, and where there are no weeds or grass, so that the sun may burn the grease into the earth. After three or four weeks, remove the animal, and place two traps in the scented earth. When a coyote has been caught here, reset the traps, but do not use any scent or bait.

(10) Badger hole setting.--After setting traps on a badger mound, brush them with a freshly killed rabbit from which the entrails have been drawn. The entrails should be thrown down the hole. No other bait or scent should be used here.

(11) Gang sets.-- Gang sets are most effective in fall, before the pups have become trap-wise. Watch the tracks closely, and find where a bunch of pups are making their main hang-out. Place about 12 traps within a radius of 100 yards, using fetid scent. If one pup is caught, it is almost certain that some other pups will get into the other traps.

SCENT PREPARATION FOR WOLVES AND COYOTES

Various scent preparations are very attractive to wolves and coyotes. The following scents may be easily prepared:

(1) Fetid scent.--Oil from decayed beaver, mice, muskrats, calves or colts, putrid blood, juices from unborn young of coyotes or wolves, or rotted suckers, with an ounce of zinc valerate, or an ounce of ground-up musk from beaver or muskrat, mixed in with every gallon, makes an excellent fetid scent. Hunters should always keep a good supply of this on hand. The older the scent, the more attractive it is to the coyote.

(2) Passion scent.-- Take wolf or coyote urine, the gall, and the anal glands, which are situated under the skin on either side of the vent and resemble small pieces of bluish fat; or if these can not be obtained, the whole anal parts may be used. In preparing 4 ounces of the mixture, use one quarter the quantity of glycerin to give it body and to prevent too rapid evaporation, and one grain of corrosive sublimate to keep it from spoiling. Let the mixture stand several days, shake well, and scatter a few drops on weeds or ground 6 or 8 inches back of the place selected for the trap. The farther from the trail the trap is set, the greater will be the quantity of scent used. A little of the scent should be rubbed on gloves and shoes to conceal the human odor. Three or four coyote droppings placed about 8 inches back from the trap pan, with passion scent dropped on them, make a good scent.

The footpads from the coyote or wolf, ground up fine, or from which the oil has been rendered, and mixed with the above scent, also a few droppings added to it, give the mixture more body and strength. The urine may be obtained from a coyote or wolf that has been trapped, or if this can not be obtained, that from a domestic dog may be used.

BOBCAT TRAPPING

A rabbit or chicken makes the best bobcat bait. This should be fastened to a tree about 20 inches from the ground, and the setting made immediately under it and near a trail where the cat has been in the habit of going back and forth.

SEASONAL TRAPPING

(1) Winter.-- Most of the snow usually falls from December 1 to April 30. Traps at this time should be placed level with the ground, and the pan should be covered with paper, or a piece of an old slicker. Let the falling snow cover the trap, then it will not crust over unless it drifts. When the snow gets to drifting, especially in regions of deep-snow, hunters should place their traps on ridges where the wind will keep the traps barely covered. On the desert, hunters should place their traps on high ground, or on badger mounds. Sandy gulches make good trap locations for winter months.

(2) Spring.-- May 1 to June 15 is the denning season, and at this time hunters should keep all their traps working. When it is found that coyotes are using a trail a great deal, there is almost certain to be a den near at this season. Trail setting should be made for the old coyote, and the pups should be taken afterward. This method should be followed by the wolf hunter in the spring, unless he is forced by the presence of other hunters to get the pups as soon as the den is located.

In trapping around the dens of old wolves in spring do not go nearer than a quarter of a mile of the den, but make from 20 to 30 good trail sets within a radius of a mile from it. Get the pups after the old wolves are caught. If pups are taken first, the old ones will leave the locality, and are hard to get afterward.

(3) Summer.-- This season is from June 15 to August 31. After June 15, the coyotes are usually pretty well scattered over the range, and do not travel much, on account of hot weather. During the day they stay in the shade of heavy brush, in badlands, or near cut banks. The hunter should put out a 3-day trap line, using from 100 to 200 traps, and should plan to make each day's ride about 20 miles. Make a triangular-shaped trap line placing traps from a quarter to a half mile apart. When skins are of no value, every third day is soon enough to visit the traps on each line.

(4) Fall.--From September 1 to November 30 is the time to make a big record in trapping. The weather cools off at this time, and the coyote pups begin to travel in little bunches. If the hunter has cleaned his summer trapping grounds, he should shift his line to a new district by September first, so as to get established in a good coyote country while the coyote pups are still easy to take. A little later they get trap-wise. At least 100 sets should be made at once. It is not necessary to use as much care in setting traps for coyote pups as it is for old coyotes. The gang set, as described in No. 11, trap setting, is best for this time of year.

HANDLING SKINS

After the front legs have been opened down the inside and skinned out, and the animal has been opened down the inside of the hind legs and the tail bone drawn, the skin should be pulled off, saving knife scarring as much as possible. Place the skin on the stretcher flesh-side out, and if there is any flesh left on the skin, it can be readily peeled off after the skin has been drying for a couple of days. The tail should be split open on the underside and salt applied. Put salt on butts of ears and lips. In the cold months the skin should be left on the boards until dry, flesh side out. If a coyote skin is taken off the stretcher and shipped before it is thoroughly dry, it will be ruined in shipping.

STRETCHER BOARDS

Two 1-inch boards, 4 inches wide, 5 feet long, planed, tapered, and rounded at one end are used for making stretchers. The two boards are fastened together by nailing a leather strap around the rounded end of each, which will act as a hinge. A cross-piece is fastened to the far end of one board to hold the two rigidly apart, one end of the cross-piece being notched or otherwise prepared so that it may be adjusted for stretching the skin after it has been fastened to the board. Skins should be put on these stretchers, placed in the shade, away from artificial heat, and kept there until they are thoroughly dry.

